S2 Student Clubs/Organizations
1 WRMC Internal Records: Black Cow Cafe
1989

BOX 4
FOLDER 8

2/21/89

Black Cow Café Checklist

FOUR WEEKS PRIOR TO PERFORMANCE

1) FIND A BAND: contact one of the booking agents (make sure the day and date are correct!)

ENTERTAINMENT NETWORK (Boston)
(617) 426-3888
Rep: Robert Sachs

APB BOOKING
182 Main St. Suite 16
Burlington, VT 05401
(802) 863-8444
Rep: Jim Swift

VENTURE BOOKING (New York City)
(212) ...

IMPORTANT!!! BEFORE giving the booking agent a go-ahead on booking the band, make sure you meet with the folks at MCAB and with the Student Activities Officer to ok the band and their fee

2) Arrange to have the performance space available, whether it is Cook SDU or other facility.

3) Make sure there is a liquor license for the performance hall -- check with the people at Student Activities for party regulations and such

4) Make the food order: usually consisting of chips, dip, table clothes, candles, beer and soda -- see the people with MCAB

5) If the Black Cow will be providing sound for the band, make initial contact with those possible sound people

Kevin Healy
56 Cayuga Ct.
Burlington, VT 05401
(802) 862-8030

Eric Porter
(802) 862-3351

Two Weeks Prior (at least)

1) Organize all of the publicity for the show

   -- **posters** --> Copied at Reprographics, but must be **put up** around campus at least a week before the show

   -- **tickets** --> use the Comic Works™ program in the radio station to make the print-ready copy of the ticket for Reprographics --> must be complete the Monday morning before the show so that the ticket sales may begin that lunch time

   -- **table tents** --> for the dinning halls, also done at Reprographics, and surprisingly effective

   -- **cart promo** to be aired on WRMC (see the current Special Productions Director for the cart production)

   -- **sheet banner** to hang on Proctor terrace (optional, but very effective!) --> should go up on Wednesday or Thursday of the performance

2) Have two cash boxes made up -- one for the ticket sales the week of the show and the other for the cash bar at the show --> speak with Charlotte Reno or other person in Student Activities

3) Stay in contact with the band's manager and/or the booking agent to make sure things are going as planned and that the band does indeed have directions to Middlebury

4) Make sure that the contracts (for both the band and the sound)have been received by the Black Cow Café and sent to Student Activities so that checks may be made by the college in order for the band to be paid on the night of the performance

5) Put in a "work order" to have the lights moved from Mead Chapel over to Cook --> arrange with Student Activities

6) Begin the discussion of the decorations and make sure the Black Cow Crew has met and knows all of the details for the show

7) Submit a **short** preview of the concert (highlighting the wondrous qualities of the band) to the Arts Editor of the Campus to be run in the edition of the paper that will come out the weekend of the show

THE WEEK OF THE SHOW

1) Pick up the Cash boxes from the cashier's office, and the posters, tickets, etc. from Reprographics

2) Arrange ticket sales with the Black Cow Crew and MCAB

3) Stay in contact with the band and sound --> organize when each will be showing up out at Cook

4) Organize the preparations for Cook --> have a few hands available to help load sound and the band's equipment

5) Have liquor bracelets from Student Activities in order to mark those able to drink

6) At the show --> have person willing to take the band to get something to eat, at the Undergraduate or at the Crest Room (to be charged on either the WRMC or MCAB account)

--> organize shifts for working the door and the bar

--> arrange for some people to stay and help clean up and unload the sound and the band

--> always have a few members of MCAB and the Black Cow Crew floating around inside the performance to keep an eye on things

BIG DIPPER

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MCAB and WRMC
present
The Black Cow Café
featuring

Right Time

Friday April 15
doors open at 9:00 PM

$4.00 (includes $.16 VT sales tax)

THE GREAT TRAIN ROBBERY

How to describe the music of **THE GREAT TRAIN ROBBERY** ? That's a difficult task. This band is not out to sound like any other act around, and if you try to compare it to others you're likely to become puzzled. The only way we can describe it is **INTENSIFIED!** What's **INTENSIFIED!** you ask? It's different things to different people. These innovative sounds of **THE GREAT TRAIN ROBBERY** have been raising eyebrows and moving hips with all the diverse crowds that it has performed for since it's emergence. The group tends to attract a wide spectrum of age groups that range from 14 to 40! So give it a listen, make your own conclusions and maybe you'll see why we call it **INTENSIFIED!**

THE GREAT TRAIN ROBBERY IS:

DAVID WATTS — Vocals and Guitars.
ANDREW CASE — Drums and Vocals.
QUINN TRUCKENBROD — Bass.
VINCENT FOSSITT — Saxes and Vocals.
GREGORY HORN — Trumpet.

ABOUT THE BAND

THE GREAT TRAIN ROBBERY has been together since mid 1985. While vocalist David Watts writes the songs, the rest of the band contributes to the arrangements. Combined influences consist of Paul Weller, The Clash, Bob Dylan, Prince, Linton Kwesi Johnson and George Clinton.

Originally based in Western New York, the band has recently moved on and relocated to Boston. Twice voted **BEST ORIGINAL BAND** in the Annual Buffalo Music Awards, the band has also received recognition from various college radio stations and awards throughout Western New York, including winning **MTV's** Battle of the Bands.

In 1987 **THE GREAT TRAIN ROBBERY** released their first independent LP, **THIS IS INTENSIFIED!** to amazing response. The record has received considerable airplay ranging from commercial to college.

THE GREAT TRAIN ROBBERY currently plays the likes of the Ritz and CBGB's in NYC and The Channel in Boston and receives overwhelming response from club owners and goers alike! Don't miss the opportunity to experience the band that creates the uniqueness that adds a new phase to American Music. Experience **THE GREAT TRAIN ROBBERY**! Accept no substitutes!

Contact: Kelly Mills, P.O. Box 654, Watertown, MA. 02172. 617-923-4662

THE GREAT TRAIN ROBBERY

RUDE AWAKENING

$1

NUMBER 11 . JUNE 1987

David Watts & The Great Train Robbery

This Is Intensified LP

This is intensified? Well, that's what the album says, and it does look pretty intense. But beyond the blue and red abstract cover, the vinyl looks like any other piece of vinyl to me. Yet this one is all the way from Buffalo, from the land where soda is known as 'pop' and Buffalo wings are as abundant as pizza is here. But what's this? Intense? Yes, but that's not all--

It's The Great Train Robbery, buffalo's hottest ska, funk, rock and soul band-- and this piece of vinyl, "This Is Intensified," makes it easy to see why.

The Great Train Robbery have been around, in one form or another, since 1983. Now they are a six-member band made up of: David Watts-vocals/guitar; Andrew Case- drums/percussion; Quinn Truckenbrod- bass; Vince Fossitt- alto/tenor sax; Greg Horn- trumpet and Jimmy Burgess- trombone. "This Is Intensified" is their first album and contains eight songs which display the band's incredible diversity and is definitely worth giving a listen (or three) to.

The Great Train Robbery combines vocals in the styling of Elvis Costello, with razor-sharp horns, which the band likes to think of as being Charlie Parker-influenced. The beat ranges from hard ska/dub to straight dance rock. The first song, Intensified, is a ska/dub instrumental with r&b overtones, very reminiscent of Bad Manners, that flows directly into Protection, which maintains a ska beat, but displays the band's soul influence. The vocals have the quirkiness of Costello, but lack his fluidity and smoothness.

Throughout the rest of the album, the pressure is kept on, and the adept horn work keeps clobbering you, while the mood and style shift deftly between cuts. This is one of the better efforts from anyone in a long time, and it would be great to see this band live, some day, in person, intensified.

----- Jessica Ruskin with Jeff Baker

Rochester's —
a damage report / an inventory /
a way of night life / Roch's great dark hope.

SCENE

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JULY

ISSUE 4

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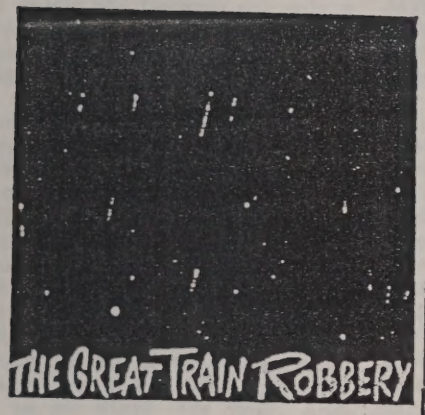
RECORD REVIEWS



The GREAT TRAIN ROBBERY
This Is Intensified

It's pretty damn exciting to review a record from a band of such excellent caliber at this stage in their career. Soon this local talent (from Buffalo) which graces our bars and local air waves will be sucked away to the valley of the giants. The debut LP. THIS IS INTENSIFIED from The Great Train Robbery is amazing. The ever-so-tight, ever so dynamic horn section and unique style of their music makes GTR one of the best upcoming bands of the 80's bar none.

This group truly knows the meaning of new music as they've side stepped gimmick, egos, image, and even defied labels (they are not cheap pop nor are they clamoring rock, etc.) and relied strictly upon their musical ability which has delivered them brilliantly. This is not only rare - it's about time. But for the reader who unfortunately has not heard the Great Train Rob bery, they can be described as having punching, ska drenched musical arrangements, slightly reminiscent of English Beat. The horn section utilizes inventive harmonic voicings which are surprisingly strong and imaginative for a young band. And, this record is not only great, it is great from beginning to end. How many records can you say that about? It is virtually impossible to pick out the strongest cuts because each one is superb. THIS IS INTESIFIED is exactly that, and will impress anyone.

RECORDS: ROCK

Great Train Robbery's new album lives up to its name.

By JEFF JOHNS
News Contributing Reviewer

RIGHT FROM the begining, popular music has been based upon elements of everything that had gone musically before it. It was a case of taking elements of sound and melding them with other bits and pieces.

When things moved into this day and age, where music has become not only a sound track for everyday listening but a precious commodity to make money from, these elements of borrowed sounds often take on a de-evolutionary process and tend to sound the same.

Commercialism breeds more commercialism, bands end up sounding more and more like clones of REO Glass-Journey-Special. All too often bands that try to sound different end up being dismissed as artistic avant-ism, but it is these individuals that are often the only bright spots on a bland horizon.

That's what makes the debut effort from a locally based sextet, The Great Train Robbery, one of the most outstanding efforts to hit vinyl this year. And that's not just on the local level. These guys compare to stuff from big leaguers like Elvis Costello, The Talking Heads, and U2.

Better known as David Watts and the Great Train Robbery, this group could be the best kept secret ever uncovered in Buffalo. The eight tracks that make up *This Is Intensified* (NC-7985 WRA-412) are an amalgamation of sound elements as disparate as reggae, rhythm and blues, jazz, ska, and AM radio pop. As the title says, "This Is Intensified."

While the band, lead by guitarist/vocalist David Watts, isn't afraid to display collective roots, they tend to mask them by flooding their arrangements with a wide array of sounds.

Recorded at River Audio Studios in Fort Erie, and produced by Watts and engineer Bill Waldman, the quality of the final product here is the cleanest local recording to hit the market in quite some time. The ambience is busy, but easily distinguishable.

The bulk of the material that makes up this album is probably familiar to Great Train Robbery regulars, but Side Two generally stacks up as the killer foursome. Opening with the incessant jangling guitars and jungle drums of "How About A Kiss," the band runs down a series of ever-changing moods.

This side's second cut, and perhaps the album's best track, "Little Persuasion," draws from such diverse elements as the Persuasions, Declan "Elvis Costello" McManus, and the sentimental quirkiness of the Squeeze.

The element that makes the Great Train Robbery stand apart from so many others that covet the pop music crown is their stylistic horn sound. Led by sax-man Vincent "The Ice Man" Fossitt, along with trumpeter Gregg Horn, and Jimmy Burgess on trombone, it is easy to imagine this horn section delivering their smoking charts with the rollicking good time moves of the Tower of Power horn section.

They can deliver quick blasts of smooth filling as on "Like A Building," or carry the rhythmic, upbeat reggae undercurrents on "Police Feel So Tall." This one carries all of the intense elements that made the Specials great, if albeit under-appreciated.

The overwhelming string of elements that go into the final concoction, the vinyl soup as it were, makes for almost as wide a range of reactions. Dancing is appropriate, singing comes after a few spins, but it is listening to the Great Train Robbery that becomes a great sport.

THE ENTERTAINMENT NETWORK
137 SOUTH STREET SUITE 2 BOSTON, MA
(617) 426-3888 02111-2802

PLATE O' SHRIMP

CHICABOB RECORDS

Редактор

the BEAT!

FREE FROM WMBF 97fm

BOSTON'S ROCK AND ENTERTAINMENT GUIDE.

Listings From April 10- April 24

IN THIS ISSUE

PLATE O' SHRIMP

Ska, Chinese Food and Philosophy.....18

ska/funk/rock/jazz

PLATE -O- SHRIMP

Photos by Eric Boyer **by A.J. Wachtel**

When a band is enjoying themselves onstage it usually has two important results; first the group plays looser and usually better, and second, the good mood is infectious and is invariably transmitted to the audience. On nights when this particular situation occurs, the evening translates into a time period where fun is the norm and electricity is in the air. Plate O' Shrimp has enjoyed many magical nights like this, and their uniformly red hot shows have greatly impressed their growing legion of fans with their excitement and unbounded energy.

Drummer Gene Brandon, keyboardist/vocalist Donny Jones, guitarist/vocalist Giorgio Scali , lead guitarist Andy Rein, bassist Ken Michaels, and percussionist Dave Wills all were college friends; in fact, Donny and Giorgio knew each other since their freshman year. They decided to form a reggae band and recruited Ken and Gene, who were in a band together but had never played that style before. Finding the other members wasn't too difficult; after all, there weren't that many musicians at Tufts, and those that were there all knew each other. Giorgio could sing but he wanted to play an instrument, so he learned to play the guitar. "Now my life is centered around the off beat," he exclaims, in reference to the ska-influenced sound of the band.

At first their shows consisted of ska covers, and soon their lead guitarist left them. Gene called Andy, who quickly took over and become an important new creative influence with his mastery of the style and his magnetic stage presence. Before their first gig they needed a name. It was 3 a.m. at a Chinese restaurant and they had just seen a late night movie "Repo Man". They figured they would be so bad they would

Giorgio's got the balls, Andy's the organizer, and the rest of us are the heart and soul of the band,"

Left to Right: Gene Brandon, Georgio Scali, Donny Jones, Andy Rein, Ken Michaels, and Dave Wills

choose a throwaway name, Plate O' Shrimp, culled from the cult film. The band caught on at their college, and they kept the name, which by now had attained provocative overtones. The name itself became something of a joke because in the end, while signifying nothing, it was great publicity; indeed, you laugh at the name but you'll remember the group.

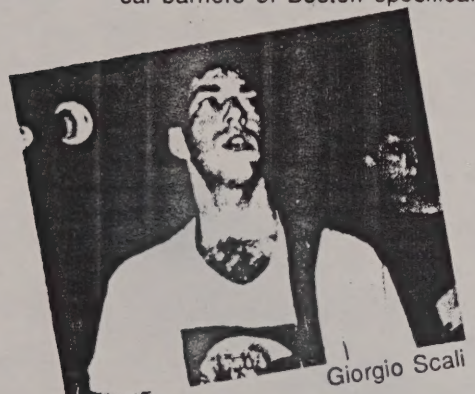
They became very popular on their campus and impressed their audiences with their intelligent approach to music. Everyone in the band comes from different backgrounds; "We all have our own neurosis," comments Scali with a slight twitch, "and when we arrange a song we base it on each other's strengths." Everyone brings something to the arrangement; in fact it is the collection of each member's different musical approaches that makes up the complete band approach, which results in the final musical product, the song. Live and onstage these arrangements translate into an electrifying stage show. They love their sound and really enjoy playing together, and get along *that* well. "If we were just hanging around together without instruments we would interact the same. Giorgio's got the balls, Andy's the organizer, and the rest of us are the heart and soul of the band," reflects Jones philosophically.

Specifically, Donny and Ken do most of the writing, and the teamwork style of the arranging is realized during practice sessions. "This ties in with the songs being built around everyone's strengths. We're not all studio quality musicians. We can't just read the charts and have everything sound top-notch. We work on the tunes and the ideas evolve," Michaels states flatly, "it's

not academic, it comes from the heart!"

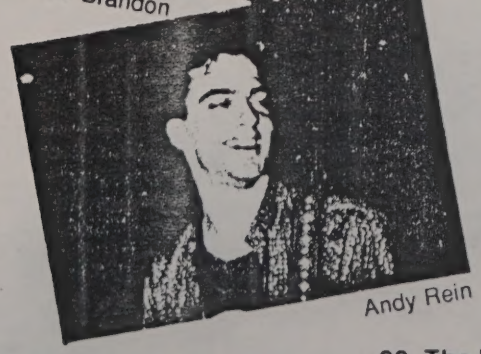
The songs themselves are abstractly sociological, with many lyrics coming from the band's political dissatisfaction, but they are not a political band in the pure sense of the meaning. Politics are the subject of many of the genre's messages, and the group's lyrics often cut across the strong ethnic and political barriers of Boston specifically, and more generally, the world. "Dream Holiday," "Not The First Time," and the hook-laden "Immorality Act" have *meaning* as well as *movement.*

Onstage, the band feeds off crowd energy; dancing crowds turn the band on. If people are sitting around drinking beers, the guys feel that they've failed to get their message across to the audience. "Our music is based on *rhythmic* energies rather than *melodic* energies," Jones mentions. One of the hazards of their energetic style is that while they may keep selling out their shows with their high quality music and riveting performances, receiving airplay is difficult. The alternative music scene relies mainly on college rather than major radio stations to reach it's audience. Unfortunately, this spotlights a great problem with local radio; there's a lot more going on musically than what is reaching the airwaves.



Giorgio Scali

Gene Brandon



Andy Rein

meaning as well as movement.

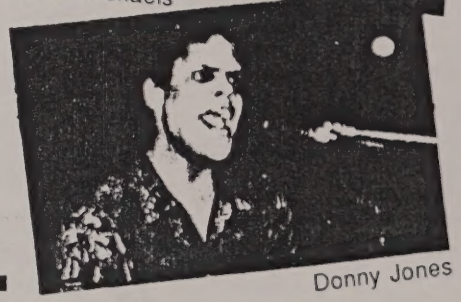
The group's sound is very funky, and it is much more melodic than pure ska. All of the band's members are influenced by African music, and the real relationship between ska and their sound is the rhythmic energies. Their songs' melodies are more pop-oriented and hook-laden while the term ska is a very broad category with different artists having different interpretations and doing varied things with the sound. Plate O' Shrimp could be accurately categorized as playing ska/funk/rock/jazz/gospel music, and it is this fusion that separates their sound from straight ska bands.

Jones expands; "We're not following a trend and we're not a major force in the re-emergence of the ska movement. People like to listen to our sound and they come to see us. If people come to see us and dig the style, they'll see other similarly styled bands and that's good for everyone. Boston is a college-oriented town and the stations have helped us out a lot. They eat it up!" There is in fact a re-discovery of rhythmic-oriented music; in the 1970's people were less aware of many African and Caribbean beats which are now prevalent in a lot of the current national and local music. For example, rap music is totally rhythmic and has directly evolved from both African and Caribbean tempos.

rhythmic rather than melodic

Dave Wills

Ken Michaels



Donny Jones

Recently, the band appeared on The Boston Ska Compilation Album, called "Mash It Up", which Dan Vitale from Bim Skala Bim, and Razorbeat Records released. They are also scheduling an E.P. which will be recorded live in the studio in the hope of capturing the excitement of their show and releasing it on vinyl. A lot of doors will open when this project hits the streets, and with the ongoing and very successful jump from a popular college band to a club group with an ever-growing following, it is a sure bet that the future looks very bright for Plate'O'Shrimp.

The Boston Globe

Ska music is alive and well in Boston

By Jim Sullivan
Special to the Globe

If you think about ska music, chances are you'll think of England, of the early '80s, and of the so-called "2-Tone" movement, a surge of ska-based bands which included Madness, the Specials, the Selector, the English Beat and Bad Manners. Ska didn't start there – it started in the '60s in Jamaica, a precursor to reggae – but the English bands repopularized it and thrust it into the post-punk world. Their sound was, by and large, melodic and peppy, designed for dancefloor delight; their messages were often political, coming from an anti-Margaret Thatcher, left-of-center viewpoint.

For a time, those bands captivated England and, when they went abroad, certain cities in the United States. All of those bands, save Bad Manners, are now defunct, and it's often thought that ska itself is a dead issue, just another short-lived English trend.

Bim Skala Bim and Plate O' Shrimp, two Boston ska bands who play Jack's in Cambridge tonight, beg to differ. "It seems like ska is building in Boston now," says Bim singer-songwriter Dan Vitale. "There's kind of a scene." "There is definitely a revival going on," adds Plate O' Shrimp singer-guitarist-songwriter Giorgio Scali, who notes a burgeoning ska movement in New York as well.

On the local front, a Boston-based ska compilation album is scheduled for release in March, featuring Bim Skala Bim, Plate O' Shrimp, Shy Five, Oddly Enough, Bosstones and Mission Impossible. Last year, Bim Skala Bim released a strong debut album, just two months after forming; Plate O' Shrimp has an EP slated for release this spring.

"Ska is as strong a brand of music as pop-rock or jazz or anything you want to name," says Vitale. "It'll peak up and down over the next decades, I assume, just like blues or rockabilly or any subgenre." Vitale is not bothered by the evaporation of English scene and traces his interest in ska back to Jamaica's Skatellites, ska's pioneers.

Ska was the starting point for Plate O' Shrimp when the band members, former Tufts University students, got together about two years ago. "It's really still the basis of our group," says Scali, "but we're not as hardcore ska as Bim. We have songs that go from ska rifs to funk riffs to rock riffs. We don't know how big an audience ska has now and we don't know what it's future is. We don't want to just be a cult group with a small ska following. We want to appeal to a large audience, as I'm sure Bim does to."

Scali prefers the term "urban gumbo" to describe his band's sound. The phrase, he says, was coined by an Oregon band called Crazy 8s: "It's a combination of ska and funk and reggae. It's all just concentrating on alternate rhythms – not rock rhythms."

Like the English 2-tone bands, though, both Bim Skala Bim and Plate O' Shrimp incorporate politics into their sound. "That's the important thing about the music," says Vitale, who organized concerts for anti-nuclear causes and worked two years with Greenpeace. "It's acceptable to say something within dance music and that's what attracts me to it. Politically, I feel that music has a power. Not to be pushed in your face, but to be worked along with the music."

Bim Skala Bim and Plate O' Shrimp each balance tension and groove, strong melody and rhythmic bounce. They raise some thorny issues in song, but have a pervasive feeling of optimism, as if to suggest life may be a constant struggle, but you've got to have hope. "Our songs are very serious," says Scali, "but they're not really *hard*. They're not gonna hit you over the head, but they really speak about people becoming more aware of things in the world and doing something about it."

The Boston Globe

THE BOSTON SOUND BRANCHES OUT

By Brett Milano

A "Boston Sound" is always hard to pin down. One month the big local trend may be garage-rock, the next it may be slick mainstream pop. Currently, the local rock scene is especially tricky. Instead of one major trend, there's a handful of smaller ones. Check out the local clubs, and in any one night you may catch a '60s pop group, a modern dance band and an angry guitar mob. This is a year of plurality, when up-and-coming bands are finding new sounds or recharging old ones.

Following is a survey of the most exciting new sounds and the bands that make them happen. We'll mostly concentrate on groups that are still establishing themselves as headliners, still building to their first hit record or national tour.

The Ska Revival. The lively, beat-happy form of early reggae called ska enjoyed a brief revival five years ago, through the English "two-tone" school with such racially mixed, ska-rock bands as the English Beat and the Specials.

Most of the English ska bands have broken up, but the sound is alive and still kicking here with ska-flavored bands like Mission Impossible and the Bosstones. There are also two newer ska bands which look especially promising:

● Plate O'Shrimp, who take their name from a philosphy lecture in the cult film "Repo Man," are more eclectic. Along with the ska rhythms, there's traces of synth-pop, straight rock and African music.

Here again, there's a mix of message and beat. One song salutes South African martyr Steven Biko; another takes its title from the African proverb "Mariscando" which translates to "it's better to live in peace and harmony."

"I don't like to put a division between black and white music," says guitarist Andy Rein. "Pop music has always been a blend of black and white, whether blues, reggae or rock 'n' roll. So why differentiate?"

The Boston Globe

Third World reggae at its slickest and best

THIRD WORLD – At the Channel with Right Time and Plate O'Shrimp Wednesday night.

By Brett Milano
Special to the Globe

Third World is one of the slickest bands in reggae, but that isn't meant as a putdown. They're a melting pot of a band, combining roots reggae (gospel harmonies, spiritual flavor) with urban reggae (dance rhythms, goodtime feel), and combining those with rock, funk and soul. In their case slick doesn't mean shallow – it means lively dance music with an edge.

MUSIC REVIEW

Wednesday's set, played to a full house at the Channel, was a party with a sense of purpose. The group held a line between political messages and pure fun. Whenever the music reached a peak, singer Bunny (Rugs) Clarke would lead a chant of "Irie!" (roughly, Jamaican slang for "All right!"). Always an entertainer, he even gave a cheer for the Red Sox. But the band, which played on last summer's Amnesty International tour, has the social conscience of the best reggae. There were a few shots at apartheid and President Reagan, but the general message was antiracism and pro-awareness.

Third World is best known for its pop crossover hits, including Stevie Wonder's "Try Jah Love" and its own "Sense of Purpose." But the group stretches out more onstage, offering more depth and surprises. Along with the catchy tunes, there were African chants, a cappella breaks, rap numbers (done in Jamaican DJ style) and long, jazzy instrumentals. Keyboardist Michael (Ibo) Cooper made good use of a Kurzweil synthesizer, imitating everything from African drums to a horn section. And there was an offbeat finale when guitarist Steven (Cat) Coore played a cello solo as the group slipped into a classical theme and Clarke "conducted" the band – shades of Electric Light Orchestra.

Although the band just wrapped up a new album ("You," recorded in New Jersey and due for release in January), they avoided new songs in favor of familiar crowd-pleasers. "Now That We've Found Love", their hit version of an old O'Jays tune, had an inspiring singalong: "Now that we've found love, what are we going to do with it?" sang Clarke. "Take action," was the response from the band and the audience.

Opening the show were two local bands, both sextets who use reggae as a jumping-off point. But their approaches are worlds apart.

Cambridge's Right Time make an unusually elegant kind of reggae, at times suggesting New Age jazz with a backbeat. Josephina Bosch's folkish vocals are the main attraction, giving a haunting touch to even their loudest numbers.

While Right Time was warm and soothing, Plate O'Shrimp was hot and rousing. Despite their jokey name (it comes from the movie "Repo Man") their sound is pure thunder: with a ska-funk influence, punkish guitar and topical lyrics. It's still goodtime dance music, but a tough and urgent kind.

METRONOME Magazine

PLATE O'SHRIMP
75 Bowdoin Ave.
Medford, MA. 02155

Management - Jodi Goldberg
969-7962 or 625-5557

Gene Brandon - Drums
Donny Jones - Keyboards and Vocals
Ken Michaels - Bass Guitar
Andy Rein - Lead Guitar
Giorgio Scali - Guitar and Vocals

Plate O'Shrimp serves up a refreshing reggae/ska flavored dish that's sure to delight. Uptempo and happy danceable songs make the shrimps a good bet for a fine evening of entertainment. You can catch them "live" around Boston's finer original establishments.

PLATE O'SHRIMP 5-SONG CASSETTE

What a fresh catch we have here. Not too fishy or tough but a true delicacy. "Dream Holiday" opens this reggae/ska flavored dish with some fine rhythms and tempo changes. Sounds like expert use of a drum machine too. Good keyboards throughout make this a real solid tune. "Mariskando" gets back to Peter Tosh roots and works well throughout. Cement like guitar work keeps the song firmly in tact and adds tasty lead licks to a real toe-tapper. This one is a real good song. "Let it Rain" is a slower tempo tune with not a lot of excitement. Good bass playing is most prominent, but the song overall isn't happening and it lingers about too long for our tastes. Luckily "Big Lips" wakes us up again with a strong but different beat and a good hook line, "You got big lips and tell me what I want to hear". A different point of view towards lips being something other than affectionate kissing apparatus. Well done. The tape closes out with "Immortality Act" a real fast paced number with good rhythms and drumming. Throughout the vocal work fits the calling perfectly and enhances every song justly. A very happy uptempo outing from "Plate O'Shrimp" this is the kind of reggae we like to hear. Simply fun!

the BEAT!
FREE FROM WAAF
BOSTON'S ROCK AND ENTERTAINMENT GUIDE.
Listings From Jan. 2 - Jan. 16

Special Year-In-Review Issue!!!

Insignifica AWARDS ISSUE or WACHTEL'S WINNERS

It is only fitting that the year's end brings with it a tip of the hat to all participants who made the last twelve months one of the greatest periods of time our entertainment scene has ever witnessed. The only criteria to making these lists was that while those named did not have to be involved with the scene for the whole duration, everyone was indeed a motivating force at one time or another during this stretch of time.

BEST STAGE PRESENCE: PLATE O'SHRIMP, EXTREME, RUN 21, PLEASURE POINTE and G.G. TURNER, BEST NEW BANDS: NITEWORK, THE SHIVERS, THE GREAT DIVIDE, THE NEXT, THE ESSENTIALS, THE ROYS, PLATE O'SHRIMP.

Boston New Top Ten Bands For '86

Listed alphabetically, here's what the booking agents for Boston's top clubs picked as the best new acts for 1986.

Dave Mars
The Channel
Ata-Tat
Catalinas
Cave Dogs
Drive All Night
Great Divide
The Keepers
Paisley Jungle
Plate O' Shrimp
Rhythm Method
The Taint

Mark Jones
Jack's
Bim Skala Bim
E-Knock
Electric Toys
Great Divide
The Next
Plate O' Shrimp
Present Tense
Shake the Faith
Treat Her Right
The Wait

Louie Salamoni
The Conservatory
Ammo
Another Day
Coyote
Mr. Curt's Camaraderie
Electric Toys
One X One
Plate O' Shrimp
Present Tense
Rhythm Method
Jeff Hudson Sushi Bar

Bob LaFee
Club III
Beggers Day
The Catch
Doctor Blacks Combo
Great Divide
Hot Pursuit
The Lunch
Nite Work
Ross Phazer
Plate O' Shrimp
The Strike

Ace Raves

The Local Music Top 45 For '86 From Ace Diamond

Special Mention: Joey Ammo, Chimera, Citizen Pain, Classic Ruins, Cola, Lonny Cormier, Cow Town, Coverstory, Danse Real, Failsafe, France, Insect Gods, Inside Outburst, Loose Ties, Bruce Marshall and the Clue, Meta Terra, Moulin Rouge, The Curtis Night Band, No Secrets, Option One, Plate O' Shrimp, Rapture Of The Deep, The Ricardos, Rock Candy, Rods and Cones, The Taint, G.G. Turner, Vatican Romance, The Vendors and Young Guns.

the BEAT!
FREE FROM WMBR 88FM
BOSTON'S ROCK AND ENTERTAINMENT GUIDE.
Listings From Sept. 12 - Sept. 26

PLATE O' SHRIMP and ONE FISH TWO FISH

Club III, Friday August 15, 1986

Both One Fish Two Fish and Club III have recently undergone several changes. The club has been completely renovated, and it looks great (no more tacky tinsel around the stage, either). One Fish Two Fish has added three new members: George Head (guitar), Peter Mello (bass), and Mike Arrigan (drums). Founding members Greg Urbaitis (keyboards) and Sue Kerr (vocals) are still with the band. The new line-up sounds stronger than ever, although the new members seemed still a little nervous and unsure of themselves onstage, something that will certainly improve with time. The group played a medley of catchy, no-nonsense pop songs seasoned with pretty melodies and a funky dance beat, providing a perfect backdrop for Sue Kerr's engaging vocals.

In keeping with the seafood theme of the night, Plate O' Shrimp was the next band up, complete with a *real* plate of shrimp and cocktail sauce at stagefront. The group's music reflected their rhythmic roots. The six member line-up even included a bongo player as well as a drummer. They played the kind of foot tappin', hand clappin' ska music that's fun to listen to and to see, even if you're not usually a fan of it. After the first few songs, the dance floor was filled. Professionalism was evident when one of the guitar players broke a string in midset and, after retuning his instrument, continued on undaunted, sans string.

All in all, a night of enjoyable music by two bands that are both good at what they do.

— Debi DeMarco

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BOSTON'S ROCK AND ENTERTAINMENT GUIDE.
Listings From Mar. 13 - Mar. 27

Local Music Review
By Ace Diamond

Plate O Shrimp **Tape**

Pleasant, ska, reggae, Caribbean influenced pop is brought to us via Plate O Shrimp. Genuinely enjoyable and uptempo, these folks are a tad more melodic, smoother and easier to listen to than, say, Bim Skala Bim. "Mariskando" is one of the hottest cuts on this five cut entry. (The whole tape is rather well produced). "Let It Rain" is also a satisfying reggae/jazz shuffle jaunt. Quite good.

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THE TUFTS DAILY

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lay through Satur-
ndays at 3 PM.

Apple Jam, The Pub, and the First Successful Breach of The Social Policy

by LEAH BERKOWITZ

Apple Jam at the Pub, though certainly a far cry from Apple Jam on the Quad, was not at all a *worse* cry. Friday night's Apple Jam show, which featured performances by The Beat Counts, The Mod Squad, The Mandate and Plate o' Shrimp, gave the Tufts Community the opportunity to experience not only the Social Policy (what article would get published without mentioning it) but, more importantly, some very fine music and a great deal of sweaty dancing. Although the technical aspects of the show, particularly the mixing, left much to be desired, the overall impression of both musicians and audience was that the show was a roaring success.

The first band to play, after a bit of juggling with the original schedule, was The Beat Counts. This band, which consists of Andy Charmats, Anthony Crabb, Andy Rein, Leslie Sandberg and Nick Shaw (apparently on loan from The Mandate), hit the stage a few minutes after 9:00 and proceeded to play its best song, a cover of Lou Reed's "Sweet Jane", as a soundcheck. Unfortunately, only a handful of people were there to hear it since fashionable tardiness seems to be an ingrained Tufts tradition. After romping through a few harmless ditties in a folksy vein with an admirable amount of enthusiasm, The Beat Counts turned its attention to a grating version of the Who classic, "Can't Explain." It was then that a guitar string broke, The Beat Counts yielded the stage to The Mod Squad, and retired to repair the string.

After The Mod Squad's set, The Beat Counts returned with a renewed resolve to get the audience moving. The band members immediately turned on their boyant personalities and swung into, of all things, a cover of "Smokin' in the Boys Room," followed by a rather silly "The Jungle Gym." The Pub crowd ate it up, even the annoying rendition of "Can't Explain" that was complete with squeaky vocals, and kicked into dance mode for the rest of the night. Although the set performance wasn't exactly riveting, The Beat Counts turned out a solid set of party rock; one which assured the people in the audience that they were there to have fun.

The diversity of Friday night's bands couldn't have been better illustrated than it was by sandwiching the Mod Squad's set in between that of The Beat Counts. Though both bands seemed to draw from a pool of influences located somewhere in the late 1960's, their sounds and moods were profoundly different.

Decked out in 60's memorabilia, The Mod Squad (guitarist Benji, bassist Gigi, and pinch-hitting drummer Ken) launched into a set that was dark moody and evocative of late nights and weird lights, visual effects provided by the surrealistic Pub Painting. The sound was heavily psychedelic, dripping with paisley but spiked with a touch of black-clad goth-rock with a touch of the Class of '76 thrown in: *the Velvet underground meets the Sisters of Mercy and play a few numbers with This Mortal Coil.*

Hundreds of images were conjured up by the all-original lyrics and music. It is a dark, brooding sound, but Gigi's voice floats effortlessly around, through and above the swirling blackness of guitar, bass and drums. Though both Gigi and Benji sing, it is her voice that is the standout. She melds Lou Reed's slurred delivery with Chrissie Hynde's raw, rough and ready sound. The Mod Squad are a refreshing foray away from the stagnating sludge of the Top Forty and into more avantguard territory.

Breaking onto the stage after The Beat Counts' second set with a frantic cover of the Talking Heads' "Life During Wartimme", was The Mandate. This nifty rhythm combo is brand new and features the undeniable talents of Alan Kotik (guitar), Peter Tulchin (keyboards), Nick Shaw (drums), Eric Johnson (bass), Josh Shire (guitar and vocals) and Lauren (backing vocals). The opening number galvanized the audience with its familiarity and dancibility and paved the way for a set that exuded energy, and was almost exclusively composed of originals.

The Mandate combines jazz, funk and pop influences which results in an exceedingly movement-oriented sound. Their music is typified by some unique and slightly off-balance back beats. Their closing song, a little ditty entitled "Jujimba," threw together a score of influences, including..wait for it...RAP, and had the audience drowning delightedly in a sea of rhythm. All of this, and they have fun doing it, too.

Closing the show was the nifty little beat combo, the illustrious Plate o' Shrimp. What can be said about their fun-time brand of skinhead moon-stomping ska? After only two band practices this year, Giorgio Scaii (rhythm guitar), Ken Michaels (bass), Donnie Jones (keyboards and fancy-footwork), Michael Ross (lead guitar), Gene Brandon (drums) and Simon (percussion) blazed through a set that was nothing short of electrifying.

The band is now playing about 80 percent originals, but those old favorites continue to pop up. From the first sweet tones of Donnie's voice on "I Can See Clearly" on through to the "Rankin' Full Stop", the floor of MacPhie was transformed into a seething mass of bodies. More calories were probably burned during Plate o'Shrimp's white-hot set than in a week of Jane Fonda workouts, as Tufts students were doing a lot of moving and enjoying themselves to the fullest degree. The audience left the Pub satisfied and literally dripping sweat. Now *that's* the sign of a superior band and a great performance!

At this point, it's appropriate to add a special thanks not only to the bands, but to Apple Jam and the Pub Committee as well. The success of Friday night only proves, as Giorgio of Plate o'Shrimp fame alluded, that if you have a great attraction, people just aren't going to care about the social policy. So, if you missed it, here's a message to you. Don't let it pass you by again!

The Wesleyan Argus

FALL OUT AT FALL BALL

Peter Ganbarg

The regional aspect of contemporary music has always underscored its popularity. Early disco became synomymous with Georgio Moroder's California. Punk rock grew up in the clubs of Lower Manhattan. In the mid 1970's, Washington D.C.'s inner city staked its claim in achieving such musical notoriety with a sound that fused together funk, rap, and soul, an enthusiasm that got the crowd completely involved with the band, and a message which represented the feeling of Washington D.C.'s inner city. The name given to this sound was "Go-Go.

One decade later, Go-go is just eginning to achieve popularity on a national level. One of the most popular bands to hail from D.C., Trouble Funk, will be headlining this year's Fall Ball, Sunday, Sept. 14, outside on Foss Hill. Trouble Funk formed in 1978 playing threenights a week, every week, anywhere they could, including school gymnasiums, recreation centers, hotel ballrooms, and inner cityclubs. In 1984, Trouble Funk was signed to Island Records, which later released a compilation of popular Go-Go bands called Go-Go Crankin'. The album, which contains three Trouble Funk tracks, was cited as one of the ten best of 1985 by *The New York Times* ,*The L.A. Times*, and *The Village Voice*.

TROUBLE FUNK

Trouble Funk's own live album, Saturday Night Live, was released last year to vast critical acclaim. Their latest vinyl release is "Good to Go," the title track to a movie which depicts the inner city life of Washington D.C.. The song currently stands in the top half of *Billboard Magazine's* soul chart. According to the *Washington Post*, "Trouble funk has established itself as the most popular vocal rhythm and blues act Washington has known in years...radical polyrhythmic future funking..."

Trouble Funk consists of ten musicians, including elaborate horn and percussion sections. Their elaborate, energetic concerts have been called "an unending source of amazement" by *Billboard*, and they have sold out shows in clubs from New York to San Francisco.

Appearing with Trouble Funk at Fall Ball will be two bands who have made a name for themselves in the Boston area. Lifeboat, a four man band from Connecticut, play exciting, straight-forward rock and roll, which has made them one of the most popular new bands on the College Radio circuit. Their last vinyl release, the self-titled EP Lifeboat on Dolphin records, was ranked as one of the ten best EP's of 1985 by a poll of 238 music professionals surveyed by *The Village Voice*. Formerly known as Arms Akimbo, Lifeboat has always been known to throw in suprising coverversions of popular songs when in concert and are definitely worth a look.

Another up and coming band from the Boston area, Plate O'Shrimp, formed just last year [redacted] Plate O'Shrimp play a fusion of ska, rock, and funk which most notably calls to mind a sound reminiscent of early English Beat. Their five song demo tape has made it to the finals of KISS 108's "Battle of the Boston Bands," and the band plans to release an EP in early 1987. According to the Boston Globe, they have "(one) ofthe most exciting new sounds (and) look especially promising."

Plate O' Shrimp will take the stage on Sunday afternoon at 1 p.m., with Lifeboat following at 2:30, and Trouble Funk headlining at 4:30.

BAJA
Mexico

THE BRISTOLS

Kelly Knapp -- Rhythm Guitar, Lead Vocals
Michele Haber -- Lead Guitar
Kim Ernst -- Bass Guitar, Backing Vocals
Lynn Ervin -- Drums

Talk about an identity crisis.

An all female rock 'n' roll band like The Bristols couldn't set foot near a stage for some time without being compared to The Go-Go's or The Bangles. Not to deny anything to those bands, mind you, but it did tax The Bristols' patience to be cast so quickly into someone else's shadow.

This group has, after all, its own identity. Allow us to make a proper introduction.

The Bristols were formed in Boston in 1983. The songwriting team of Kim Ernst and Kelly Knapp, expatriate Detroiters, moved to Massachusetts three years earlier, attracted by the burgeoning Boston music scene and the primal rock of bands such as The Real Kids and The Nervous Eaters. With friends Michele Haber and Colleen Kelly, students at Emerson College, the four became the Bristols. As rank amateurs--adhering to the punk credo of the day, in which anyone could start a band--The Bristols were willed in to being.

Initial gigs for the band were tentative, to be polite, but The Bristols early on found favor among those on Boston's music scene. One of those early fans was Elliot Easton of The Cars, who for a time took the fledgling band under his wing. Easton let the band use his basement for rehearsal and even loaned them some of the equipment from his storied collection. Eventually, Easton would produce an early demo tape for The Bristols.

In 1985, Colleen Kelly left the band's drummer spot to pursue another career in New York City. She was replaced by Lynn Ervin, the only daughter of the late, great jazz saxophonist Booker Ervin (who had recorded with such giants as Charles Mingus, Eric Dolphy and Jacki Byard, in addition to his own solo recording career). Scene observers will readily testify that Lynn has given The Bristols' sound a more solid punch.

In 1986, The Bristols released a three-song demo tape to Boston radio stations with spectacular results. Two of those songs hit the #1 spot on a pair of Boston's most powerful and influential commercial stations. "You're All Around" nailed the top slot of WBCN's local music list, while "Soldier Of Misfortune" did the same for the band on competitor WFNX's chart.

The Bristols also received an unexpected--if veiled--compliment from The Smithereens, for whom The Bristols had once opened. Pat DiNizio, it turns out, penned The Smithereens' hit song "Behind The Wall Of Sleep" about bassist Kim Ernst, and has since become a strong supporter and friend.

As the technical skills and the songwriting talents of The Bristols have sharpened and grown, so has the band's sphere of influence. They've opened for industry heavyweights such as Julian Cope, The Ramones, David Johansen, Dwight Twilley, The Replacements, Jason and the Scorchers, Red Rockers, Til Tuesday and The Del Fuegos. The group has played all the important Boston clubs such as The Rat, The Channel and The Paradise and has made forays into neighboring New Hampshire and Rhode Island.

The immediate concern for The Bristols is twofold: making inroads to the fertile New York City clubland and, most importantly, securing a recording contract with a major record label. With a batch of new songs that are at once earnest, forceful and passionate, The Bristols are poised and ready to turn more than a few ears their way.

Now it's time to show the world who <u>this</u> Rock 'N' Roll band is. We'd like to suggest humbly that The Bristols are beyond mere comparison.

MUSIC

The Kids In Bristol Are Sharp As A Pistol

BRETT MILANO

The year 1987 was when most of Boston's best rock bands finally got what's coming. Scruffy the Cat, Dumptruck, and Salem 66 all released acclaimed albums. Throwing Muses got a major-label deal. The Neighborhoods caught the ear of David Bowie, who had them open for him at Sullivan Stadium. Barrence Whitfield became a big star in Europe, filling their shortage of manic rock'n'roll. The Lyres didn't make a record this year, but they're known from coast to coast as kings of the garage. Treat Her Right are reportedly the latest local band to get a record deal. The Swinging Erudites stirred up national notoriety with "Walk With an Erection," and the Blackjacks are back together. So you might say that every deserving local band has won some attention.

But as Johny Carson always says to Ed, "Wrong again, buffalo breath." Consider Push Push and the Bristols, two bands that earned their shot at the big time long ago, but haven't gotten it yet. Both bands have thrown away songs that many locals would kill to have written. And there's no snobbish elitism here. Both write rockin', between-the-eyes pop songs. Yet nothing by either band has ever appeared on vinyl, either locally or nationally. And until recently, both were still playing opening slots at clubs, while the trendy flavor-of-the-month bands were headlining.

So what went wrong? It's partly down to bad luck—but in Push Push's case, it may be more like good judgment. One of the first commandments of struggling bands is, "Thou shalt not turn down a deal from a major record label." Push Push did it—twice. So their new album, *Can't Wait*, has so far appeared only on a locally-distributed cassette, with editions of only a few hundred. But at least it really sounds like Push Push—and that, says the band, is the point.

Back in 1984, Push Push seemed on the verge of something big. They had national attention, with *Musician* magazine proclaiming them one of the country's best unsigned groups. They had a local hit with "This Kind of Love," still one of the half-dozen catchiest songs to come out of Boston this decade. And they had a development deal with a big national label, who were paying the band to work out their songs in the studio. After that—nothing. No record. No more national attention. But a lot of hard-won growth for the group.

The problems stemmed from the nature of the deal. The label was preparing to release a record that was, by the band's admission, not very good. "We weren't ready," admits guitarist Adam Steinberg. "We were still developing, and we knew it," adds singer/guitarist Denny Brennan. "The record that almost got released was real glitzy, it sounded great. It just didn't sound like us." So the band moved on to a different national label, but the situation was still worse. They would have released a Push Push record, but might not have promoted it or made sure anybody heard it. The band opted out, but paid a high price. They spent a year under contract to each label, which meant they weren't allowed to release anything for two years.

But if they had made a big-label album, it probably wouldn't have the assurance that comes through on *Can't Wait*. In their early gigs, Push Push would jump from straight pop, to country, to rockabilly, funk or reggae; now they can hint at those elements within a single song. There's hints of Elvis Costello here and Buddy Holly there; but you really can't resemble those people unless you can write a certain kind of song. Something emotional but not wimpy, something smart that hits the heart. (The album will be released on vinyl next year—but if you can't wait, cassettes are available from Push Push, 258 Mt. Vernon St., West Newton 02165).

"I'd rather be in the position we are now—fending for ourselves, instead of being steamrolled by an industry," says Brennan. "There's always times when you say, 'Jesus, do we want to do this anymore?' But we realized we weren't doing this to get signed. We were doing it to be in a band."

Bristols' Revenge

Three years ago, by their own admission, the Bristols weren't very good. In some ways they're right, but it depends on what you were looking for. If you wanted a slick and professional band, with a brand-new sound, the Bristols weren't it. But there was something special about them, even then. At the time, the best bands in Boston (including the Lyres, Barrence Whitfield and the Prime Movers) were turning back to the '60s to find a magic that was missing everywhere else. Since the Bristols weren't a garage band, they turned back to the "girl-group" sound of the '60s. A bit of the Shangri-La's, a little Patsy Cline, a little Jackie DeShannon. It sounded fine, and there was an implicit promise that they'd keep that freshness as they found their own sound.

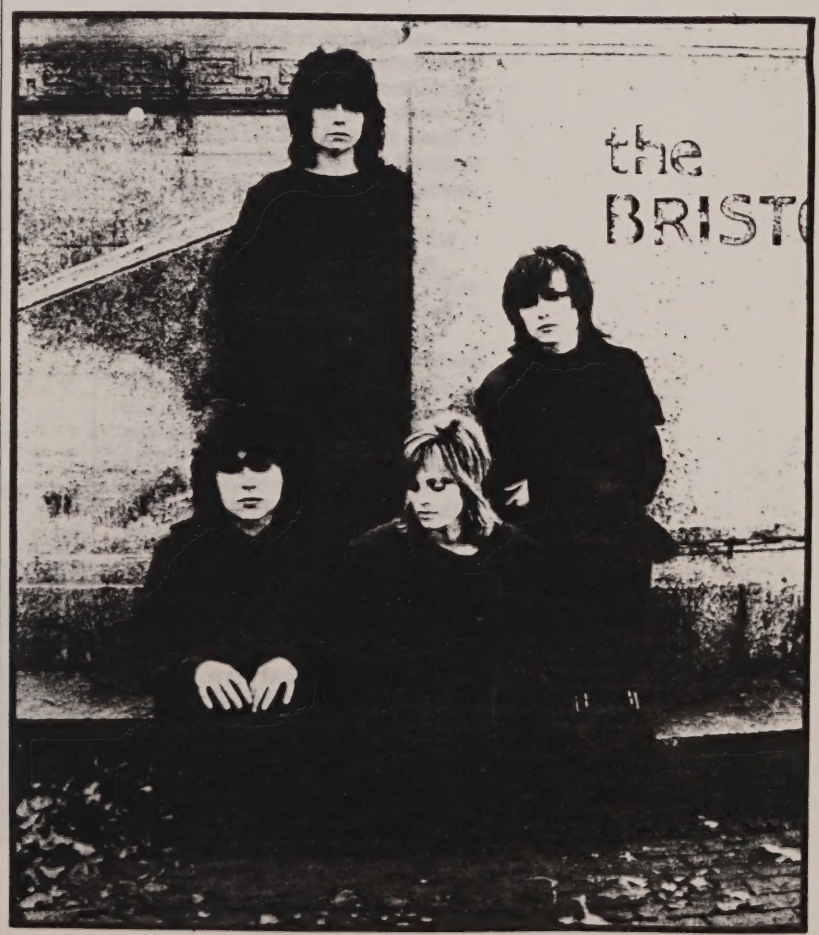
Sure enough, that's what's happened. They're very much a rock band now, making a striking contrast of sweet vocals (Kelly Knapp) and nasty guitars (Michele Haber). Much of the '60s sound has gone out the window, but the knack for direct pop songs remains. "When we first learned to play, everything we did was the result of our limited knowledge," says bassist Kim Ernst. "I think we were afraid to sweat," adds Knapp. "A total change occurred. We used to tell our friends, 'We're playing at the Rat tonight, but you don't want to come.' Now we can't wait for them to see us."

The catalyst was an especially nasty season in early '86. Within three months they lost their drummer, lost the WBCN Rumble, and lost a prospective record deal. The Rumble is best-forgotten. The Bristols can join the Blackjacks, Band 19 and Mission of Burma in the ranks of great bands who didn't get past the preliminaries. The drummer was replaced by the much feistier Lynn Erwin, who aided their move to a harder rock sound (She was also responsible for the band learning Husker Du's "Sorry Somehow," of which they do a hot version onstage).

The record deal was another story. It seems that someone from Elektra saw them on a sloppy but inspired night, and hoped they'd make the same disturbance in the studio. They tried, but to no avail. Like Push Push, they came out with a too-slick record that they're glad nobody heard. "We were so sad, and so green," says Ernst. "We had all these high hopes, and the tape sounded awful. That's when we realized that we didn't sound like we wanted to sound. We took everything apart, threw out the songs that weren't making it, and rebuilt the ones that did."

These days the Bristols are in the same position as Push Push. There's no big machine behind them, but they're their own band and have reason to be confident. Sitting downstairs at the Rat last week, the band got mock-tearful as they pondered their situation. Ernst: "We don't have a record, we don't have anybody telling us we're great . . ." Knapp: "Nobody's giving us any money . . ." Haber: "But for the first time, we like the way we sound. Sometimes I even wish I could go to our gigs."

She can't, but you can. And should. ■



The Bristols

THE WEEKENDER AND SUPPLEMENT TO WATERTOWN (MASS.) PRESS, CAMBRIDGE (MASS.) CHRONICLE, AND SOMERVILLE (MASS.) JOURNAL

The Bristols exude rock 'n' roll desire

By Matt Moravec

In her farewell "Cellars By Starlight" column for The Boston Phoenix, Sally Cragin strongly recommended an all-female band called The Bristols, extolling their particularly potent version of Husker Du's "Sorry Somehow."

The Bristols have actually been in existence since 1983, when transplanted Detroiters Kim Ernst and Kelly Knapp hooked up with the music scene by an appearance of The Real Kids at the Detroit nightclub Bookies around the turn of the decade. The influence of that heady time of fast, loud, and melodic styles is evident in today's Bristols sound — Ernst and Knapp's songs abound in smashing hooks.

In the beginning, however, the band members learned as they went along, warming up for the Nervous Eaters with only a rudimentary knowledge of their instruments. They soon caught the attention of Elliot Easton of The Cars, who guided them for some time and produced an early demo tape.

The songs "You're All Around" and "Soldier of Misfortune" from a more recent demo tape hit Number One among local songs on radio stations WBCN and WFNX respectively in the spring of 1986.

The Bristols have opened for a number of nationally prominent acts such as The Ramones and The Replacements, and Pat DiNizio of The Smithereens even wrote that group's biggest hit, "Behind the Wall of Sleep," about Ernst, after the two shared a bill.

Music notes

Emerson College students Michele Haber and Colleen Kelly. (Colleen Kelly left in 1985 to pursue another career in New York, and was replaced by Lynn Ervin, daughter of noted jazz saxaphonist Booker Ervin.)

Ernst and Knapp had been inspired to move to Boston and join

The Bristols headlined last Thursday night at TT the Bear's in Cambridge, just 24 hours after the first snowstorm of the season, with a blaze of unabashed full-chord glory.

Physically, the band wears a retrospective look, with bangs and loose-fitting T-shirts, suitcoats and black sweaters, but it served to make a statement about its musical influences, out of which a certain mid-'60s mod and British blues-based sound can be counted.

The Bristols did not jump around a lot. Instead they focused their energies on stabilizing the frantic pace of their show with intense and often bitter emotions. Lead guitarist Michele Haber prowled the stage with a low-slung Gibson to the no-nonsense, big-sound beat of Lynn Ervin's drums. Chief songwriters Kim Ernst on bass and supporting vocals and Kelly Knapp on vocals and rhythm guitar huddled to the left and center.

To the background of bluesy box-chording, Ernst and Knapp often approximated Appalachian harmonies. Knapp affected a country twang to her sultry alto, coming out something like a cross between Chrissie Hynde of The Pretenders and Linda Ronstadt. The combination of styles was extremely successful and set The Bristols apart from The Go-Go's and The Bangles, to which they might be compared.

Many of their songs reflected a tough and often militant stance toward masculine addressees. "Let me go now or I'll leave you later" was the warning of one refrain. "You're just a waste of my precious time" is in the bridge to the Cult-like "Hurtin' Kind." And in the nastiest kiss-off song of all, "Just Like You," Knapp sang, "I told you before—you're a hopeless case," backed by a suitably sly slide guitar by Haber.

The covers of The Real Kids' "Baby's Book," Husker Du's "Sorry Somehow" and The Boxtops' "The Letter," were indeed highlights of the show, but the band's own "Having It All," and ironic look at success with killer hooks, was perfection from start to finish. If The Bristols can whip up a few more like "Having It All," then look out!

It came as no surprise that The Bristols were onstage before they knew how to play their instruments. Last Thursday, that desire to rock'n'roll still burned through a premature winter's night. I join Cragin in urging you to see The Bristols rave it up next time.

Cellars by starlight

Goodbye cool world

by Sally Cragin

In November of 1984, six months after I took over "Cellars by Starlight," I saw at least 42 bands in 15 days as I ricocheted from the Rat to Chet's to Jumpin' Jack Flash to Spit to the Metro to the Orpheum to the Channel and back to the Rat. Among the gigs were shows by the Turbines, the Dogmatics, the Blackjacks, and a host of other outfits, some of whom are still with us. Heady times, but even then complaints were rampant about how the punk scene was gasping for breath, if not cooling on the slab. (By 1984, hardcore had run its course — anything worth cursing had already been vilified 50 times in 50 seconds.) In 1987, three years later, I hear the same gripes — a little more softly now, a little more bitterly, with a little more resignation. And I'd be lying if I didn't admit that the current shaky state of *le monde pop* tempers the sadness of this announcement: after nearly six dozen columns, this is my farewell. Frankly, I didn't think I'd last as long as I have. Since this column began, some 15 years ago, under the stewardship of James Isaacs, there have been just four regular writers (the other two were Doug Simmons and Joyce Millman). "Cellars" is a high-burnout proposition, akin to long-distance truck driving. Comments this writer has heard over the years have ranged from "Wow, you get records in the mail, and get in free to all the clubs? Wow!" to "You have to stay out *every* night, in those smoky dives? Gawd." Clubgoing in Boston is serious business indeed.

Things will change — history assures us of that. As we lurch into 1988, there are bright spots in the night skies that weren't blazing three years ago. The overriding problem is that the sky is smaller — there are fewer showcase clubs anywhere, and bands are hanging tough at best. Groups like Nova Mob, Big Barn Burning, the Bags, the Pixies, and the Cave Dogs are coming right along — and the Bags and Pixies have already been signed to indies with clout (Restless and 4AD respectively). Sure looks easy — local gigs lead to tapes, then college-radio play, inclusion in the indy bible, the *College Music Journal*, and subsequent signing to a small label.

So Boston is still a career-opportunity mecca for hopefuls — Big Barn Burning, for one, happily relocated here from South Carolina (though Red Rockers and Primitive Romance stalled after similar transplants). As a springboard, this city can fling both heavies and lightweights high and far, but nowadays, the launch is being accomplished by fewer and fewer small, local labels. A report on the determined clutch that endured beyond the heyday of cottage-music-industry recording in 1977-'84 would have to touch on Throbbing Lobster and dear departed Chuck Wetnose, Ace of Hearts, Taang!, and Modern Method.

Between 1984 and 1986, Throbbing Lobster released a slew of records by home-based bands. Along with two highly regarded compilations, groups like the Underachievers, Chain Link Fence, the Prime Movers, and Classic Ruins had their own albums, and the label also issued 45s by the Edge and the Outlets. These acts were too tame for TL's colleague, Taang!, which sponsored records by Dredd Foole and the Din, Moving Targets, and Gang Green. This year, it would seem that TL and Taang! are resting on their laurels — conversely, Ace of Hearts (still the veteran postpunk venture) has been more active in the last couple of years than when punk was thriving. This label seems to have fixated on just two acts — the Lyres and Roger Miller (in Mission of Burma, solo with his Maximum Electric Piano, and with Birdsongs of the Mesozoic). Not such a bad maneuver, actually — Miller may be the most durable local hero of

of Newbury Comics) vanished into the void after its late-'70s, early-'80s art-punk compilations, resurfacing only long enough to put out Band 19's promising 1985 EP and the occasional heavy-metal-core manifesto.

To my mind, there's another phenomenon that's as much a hindrance to local invention and triumph as the dwindling number of clubs and the falling-off of indie-label activity — namely, the clout that the Boston Music Awards and the redoubtable Rumble have accumulated without really earning it. It may seem odd to complain about anything that focuses additional attention on the scene; after all, more is more. But the effect of these two events is to focus that attention on a make-or-break point in career building. Each year, just before the Rumble nominees are announced, bands lobby and gossip with mounting fervor. After the slate is posted, the overlooked mask their disappointment with a "Maybe next year" shrug. By contrast, those included have recently given up even pretending to hide their glee. All through the Rumble itself the news is not who's playing what but who's crying foul over placement on the bill or the judges' predilections or some other extra-musical matter — and all this seems out of all proportion to the practical benefits of winning (remember, 'til tuesday were the last group to parlay their triumph into a major-label score. Around here, the Rumble has become a convenient excuse. "Yeah, I don't know what happened after the Rumble," is one oft-voiced complaint. "But we're getting it together now, you bet."

Three and a half years ago, Boston's big major-label success stories were 'til tuesday, Face to Face, and the Del Fuegos, and three and a half years later, that's still basically the case, with stray strivers like Throwing Muses (signed to Warner Bros.), Scruffy the Cat (signed to Relativity), Barrence Whitfield (Rounder), and the Lyres embarking on national and international tours. Along the way, we've seen bar pleasers like the Prime Movers and the Turbines call it quits. (Oh, those guys will convene for select occasions. Last summer, at Green Street Station, reunited for Sarah Eaton's going-away time fan was moving to Manhattar ving a go of wedding gigs — ls of writers Byron C of drummer Fred

As stated abo bands but the seemed impre you've just ar the Inn-Squ (restaurant Jonathan much. An town's divy Blue Under (remember that causes. Even the jazz spot evaporating.

But there's a slim survival neophytes, unwinded pioneer veterans. In the months to come the Zulus, the Condo Pygr Especially the Bristols. That ba "Sorry" at a recent Green breaker. One of the hits Hüsker Dü's swan-song T interpreted by the Bristols left unplumbed by the Hüskers. pivotal passage of the number — the co of the apology — was all the more chi delivered by lead singer Kelly Knapp's crysta

But there's a slim survival group of promising neophytes, unwinded pioneers, and indefatigable veterans. In the months to come, check out the DeNiros, the Zulus, the Condo Pygmies, and the Bristols. That band's cover of Hüsker Dü's Especially the Bristols. That band's cover of Hüsker Dü's "Sorry" at a recent Green Street show was a heart-breaker. One of the hits from *Candy Apple Grey*, Hüsker Dü's swan-song Twin/Tone album, "Sorry" as interpreted by the Bristols explored depths of remorse left unplumbed by the Hüskers. At Green Street, the pivotal passage of the number — the controlled hysteria of the apology — was all the more chilling when delivered by lead singer Kelly Knapp's crystalline country soprano. And indeed, the gradual infiltration of women players — not just token singers or tambourine shakers — has been the most hopeful legacy of postpunk's seasons in the sun. A month ago I was able to devote an entire column to women

Cellars by starlight

The girls in the bands

by Sally Cragin

Excerpt taken from an article interviewing members from 4 BANDS

THE BOSTON PHOENIX, SECTION THREE, SEPTEMBER 25, 1987

Success has been more elusive for the all-female rock-boogie band the Bristols. In 1983, the then-neophyte rockers got money from Elektra to make a demo — and couldn't bring themselves to turn it over. Four years later, lead singer Kelly Knapp can take a sanguine look back. "We barely knew how to play then. And going into a studio? We wanted to go from A to Z without learning any of the middle." The Elektra experience was shattering, but the women realized that patience and practice were the keys to recovery.

"Kim [bassist Ernst] and I are from Detroit," Knapp explains. "And in the Midwest in the late '70s, there was no one in my high school or junior high into music. Sure, you've got Motown, but the only women I saw doing music were singers with really trained voices. That made me think I couldn't do it, though I'd always dreamed of being in a band. But then, girl musicians were always singers with great voices." Then came the first Pretenders' album, and a gradual about-face. "Here was Chrissie Hynde, who *doesn't* have a trained voice." Quite an ear-opener for a girl who'd fantasized about being just a back-up singer. Encouraged by their friends in the Real Kids and Nervous Eaters, Ernst and Knapp headed to Boston, where they met guitarist Michelle Haber. "We got a lot of encouragement from people to start a band," Knapp remembers. Then came the Elektra fiasco, a new drummer (Lynn Ervin), and the 1986 Rumble. "We really changed after that. Everyone goes in there thinking — I don't know what. We went in there thinking we were going to do really well."

That night, technical problems were the first of their problems — since much of their material pivoted on crystalline harmonies and lock-step chording, the group lacked the flexibility to make a fast recovery, and were soundly defeated by eventual semifinalists Hearts on Fire. But they were learning. "We took three months off after that," Knapp recalls. "We'd thought we were a lot better than we were." Vacations from performing, it has turned out, are a regular occurrence for these women; it periodically alleviates the pressure of making it. After five years together, the band attributes stability to a shared vision and firm friendships. "A lot of the bands around here are together for a year or two and break up. People expect a lot to happen in a year, but you're just beginning then. We learned everything together, and we're good buddies besides. And I think it's only been in the last six months that we've been happy with what we've done. We're ready for some vinyl now. Sure, bands like the Bangles have opened doors — you know, poppish girls' bands are accepted now — but we'll have to open our own doors,

Boston Herald 9-23

ALL-FEMALE rock bands are rare — the only such group to really make a dent in the charts lately is The Bangles. On the local scene, one of the better groups in town is also all-female: The Bristols. Tonight, they play at Green Street Station with Illiterate Beach and Xanna Don't & the Maybes. For more information call 522-0792.

HOT PICK

The Bristols *(pictured) will be the special guests of* ex-Teardrop Explodes singer Julian Cope, *when he brings his show to the* Channel *on Tuesday, Sept. 2. The band has been on the Boston music scene for almost five years. The members include Lynn Ervin on drums, lead singer Kelly Knapp on rhythm guitar, Kim Ernst on bass and back-up vocals, and Michele Haber complementing the group on lead guitar. Their music is original, with Kim and Kelly writing most of the tunes; but everyone gets involved in the arrangements. The Bristols have three new songs on a tape that will be finished this fall.* "Hurtin' Kind," "Havin' It All" *and* "Just Like You" *will be distributed to radio stations in the Boston area. Catch the Bristols at 9:45 p.m. at the Channel, 25 Necco St., Boston. Admission is $8.00 at the door. For further information, call 451-1050.* – the Boston TAB – Sept. 1, 1987

THE FOOLS

From "Psycho Chicken" to "Life Sucks" to "World Dance Party" to "Bite It" these guys continue their crusade to be "just lighter dudes". New LP "Wake Up: It's Alive" available now.

The Fools

TAYLOR MADE

Nominated "Outstanding R & B Act" in the 1988 Boston Music Awards, these "soul rockers" are seven pieces of slick, smooth, shake-your-bones excitement; fast becoming New England's most sought after party band!

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A & M Recording Artists; voted "Best Hard Rock Band" two years in a row at the Boston Music Awards. Watch for their major label debut due out this fall.

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THE GREAT TRAIN ROBBERY

MTV Battle Of The Bands winner, GTR has released "This is Intensified!"; an album full of you-won't-sit-still-for-a-minute music. Call for the record or see 'em from Boston to Buffalo!

THE TOASTERS

From New York City: Ska music at it's finest. Featured on the international compilation, "Skanking Around The World". New LP due out this fall on Celluloid Records.

AL HALLIDAY & THE HURRICANES

"Voted "Best Local Group"; dynamic and powerful. The Hurricanes "I Can See Forever In Your Eyes" may be the year's best single cut by a local group." Boston Magazine 1987

The Unattached

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Voted "Best Ska/Reggae Band" at the 1988 Boston Music Awards.

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Barrence Whitfield and the Savages

WRECKING CREW

Doing the best of the oldies

BIM SKALA BIM

New England's premier ska band. New LP,"Tuba City" due out in September on Celluloid Records. Also featured on the international compilation "Skanking Around The World"

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"Down" "Nowhere To Hide" "Two O'Clock Jump"

THE SOULS

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